India's Ancient Chronology and Civilisation.

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India's Ancient Chronology and Civilisation.

India has had a hoary past, and India was once the scene of a civilisation which may, in some sense, be qualified as great. But the ordinary run of Indians have very wrong notions of the extent of that past and of the type of that civilisation. We shall endeavour, in this short paper, to present a true notion of the one and of the other. The ancient records of India, scattered throughout its Sanskrit and Tamil literatures will be our guides in this labour of love.

India's Ancient Chronology.

The vague belief among most people is that Indians claim for the history of the motherland a fabulous number of years. It may not, however, be generally known that this sort of calculation was *not* made by the ancient Indians. It was, on the contrary, introduced in comparatively recent times.

Before attempting to substantiate this statement, it is well to give an idea of the chronology of modern Indians. Their computation is in the great mundane periods called Yugas, Manvantaras, Kalpas &c. According to the Vishnu Purana and the Surya Siddhanta:

The Kali yuga with its morning and evening or Sandhyas consists of	432,000	years
The Dvapara yuga	864,000	,,
The Treta yuga	1,296,000	,,
The Krita yuga	1,728,000	,,
	4,320,000	,,

The four yugas together, i.e. 4,320,000 years, form a Maha yuga. 71 Maha yugas with an additional evening of 1,728,000 years—namely 308,448,000 years—make one Manvantara or age of Manu. 14 Manvantaras with a morning of 1,728,000 years—namely 4,320,000,000 years—constitute one Kalpa. Two kalpas make a day and night of Brahma. 360 such days and nights make one Brahma's year, which therefore equals 3,110,400,000,000 years. And a hundred such years, i.e. 311,040,000,000.000 years, make up his lifetime, which is called Para, and the half of which is known as Pararddha. One Pararddha or half of Brahma's existence, terminating with the great Kalpa called the Padma Kalpa, has already expired. The present Kalpa in which we now are, is called Varaha, and is the first of the second Pararddha of Brahma's existence!

It takes one's breath away to think of the number of years which this system of computation claims for the age of man on earth. At the end of each Kalpa or *day* of Brahma (=4,320,000,000 years) a dissolution of the world occurs and lasts through his *night* or another Kalpa. At the end of the night he awakes and creates anew. In the present Varaha Kalpa, six Manus, of whom Svayambhuva was the first, have passed away, the present Manu being Vaivasvata. The time that has elapsed with the six Manus in the present Kalpa is,

therefore, six Manvantaras or 308,448,000 × 6, that is to say, 1,850,688,000 years. In other words,

MAN HAS BEEN ON THIS GLOBE

for 1,850,688,000 years! The 100,000 years once hastily given to man by some scientists pales into insignificance before this formidable array of figures!

But we must now consider the basis for this calculation. It must be first noted that no traces are to be found of this elaborate system of Yugas, Manvantaras, and Kalpas in the oldest Indian record, the Rig Veda. The authors of the hymns of this famous collection use indeed the word *yuga* (as pointed out by Muir in his Original Skt. Texts Vol. I, p. 45 and seq.) but "in the sense of age, generation or tribe" without indicating by it any definite mundane period. Their idea of numbers was fairly reasonable and modest.

The earliest account of the four Yugas is found only in the Mahabharata whose compilation in the present shape is generally assigned to/the beginning of the Christian era, and in the metrical Manusmriti composed, according to Dr. Buhler, between the 2nd century B. C. and the 2nd century A. D. (For references the reader is sent to V. Gopala Aiyer's *Chronology of Ancient India* to which I owe the greater part of what follows). According to the earlier conception contained in these works, the Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali yugas consisted of no more than 4000, 3000, 2000, and 1000 years respectively with the addition of their mornings and evenings amounting to 800, 600, 400 and 200 in the same order. The Mahabharata says (iii, 12826 ff.): "In the beginning after the destruction of the entire universe they say that there are four thousand years:

that is the Krita yuga, which has a morning of as many hundred years and an evening of the same duration." And then the three other yugas are enumerated with their respective thousands and hundreds successively diminished by one. "This period of twelve thousand years is known by the appellation of Yugas. A period extending to a thousand of these is called a day of Brahma." We have here the fantastic idea of a "day of Brahma", but the figures for the Yugas are modest enough. Likewise in Manusmriti (i.69,70) we read: "They say that four thousand years compose the Krita Yuga, with as many hundred years for its morning and the same for its evening. In the other three Yugas with their mornings and evenings the thousands and hundreds are diminished successively by one." How, then, account for the

COLOSSAL MULTIPLICATION OF NUMBERS

to which we referred in the beginning of this study? It is the "highly imaginative temper" of the authors of the Puranas (and these cannot be dated earlier than the 5th century A. D.) which conceived the idea of interpreting the years of the Yugas as *divine* instead of ordinary human years. In early Hindu literature we often meet with the fancy that the period between the winter and summer solstices known as Uttarayana is a day, and that between the summer and winter solstices or Dakshinayana is a night of the gods. This may very well be a reminiscence of the old Aryans who had, previous to their migration into India, probably lived near the northern frigid regions which have but one long day and one equally long night during the course of the year, the *devas* inhabiting them literally meaning white or shining people. Now, as according to old Hindu notions the year consisted of only 360 days, a

Deva year would require 360 of gods' day-and-nights or 360 human years. So that when once the Yugas came to be interpreted in terms of the fancied divine years, the years of each Yuga with its morning and evening (another fanciful addition, as will be seen presently) had to be multiplied by 360! Thus, the Kali Yuga, for example, having originally only 1000 + 200 years, became a period of 432,000 years!

Gopala Aiyer's interesting suggestions as to the way in which the original 1000 years' cycle or yuga of the Indians began to be added to by the so-called morning and evening or Sandhayas, and further multiplied by 360, are well worth study. He points out, by an examination of the date of the Mahabharata war, that the original Kali yuga or cycle of 1000 years, which commenced soon after that war and which was identical with the first cycle of Kollam Andu, came to an end in 177-76 B. C. The Namburis, who were a branch of the Aryan family settled in Malabar, continued to count a second cycle begining from 76 B. C., and that terminated in 825 A. D., Their third cycle commencing from 825 A. D., is now known as the Kollam Andu after the famous town in Malabar. But the Kali yuga had a different transformation among the main body of the Aryans. The old belief was that the Kali-yuga, would be followed by the Krita yuga,

AN AGE OF TRANSCENDENT PURITY

when, according to the Mahabarata (Vana Parva CXLIX), "Every one had religious perfection. There was then neither disease, nor the decay of the senses. There was no malice, no pride, no hypocrisy, no discord, no ill-will, no cunningness, no fear, no misery, no envy, no covetousness." As the Kali yuga of 1000 years

came to an end in 177 B. C., the golden age of Krita ought to have dawned. But it was at that very time that Buddhism, foreign invasions and barbarian influences were rampant in India. So the question to be solved by the learned was whether the Krita really signified a golden age of religion and virtue and whether that Yuga had already set in. The first question could not have been answered in the negative by those who reverenced old beliefs; the second was not quite so dangerous. The learned, therefore, solved the difficulty in a manner characteristic of every conservative people. "They supposed that the effects of Krita yuga could not all at once change the influences of a thousand years of the Kali age. As in the physical world the darkness of the night is first removed by the milder influence of the dawn before the sun shows himself in all his glory, just as the morning twilight heralds the day and the evening twilight precedes the night, so, in the moral world, there ought to be a transitional period when the effects of both the Kali and the Krita yugas would merge into one another. This necessary interval of transition was called the Sandhya (junction) period, and as the Kali lasted for 1000 years, the twilight periods preceding and succeeding it were each made to extend for an additional tenth part of the Yuga, a proportion which seems to have been borrowed from the daily phenomena of morning and evening twilights."

Thus the Kali age was extended by 200 years making 1200. The Krita, Treta and Dvapara yugas were likewise alloted Sandyas or morning and evening periods in the same proportion, namely 800, 600, & 400 years respectively. The Kali yuga thus extended came to an end in 24 A. D. It was eagerly hoped that at

least after that critical epoch better times would dawn in India. But "far from there having been any sign of the Krita age, Buddhism was at its height and Brahmanism at its lowest ebb in India. Scepticism had come to prevail over orthodoxy. The greatest king of the time was Kanishka, a barbarian professing an atheistic creed. The fourth great council of Buddhism was then formulating its dogmas in the land of Vedic ritualism. Many Mlechcha kings were despoiling the north and the west of India. Instead of the Vedic religion coming back in its pristine glory, it was losing its most influential adherents through the proselytizing zeal of Buddha's creed. Could such a time, the Hindus seem to have asked themselves, be the beginning of the golden age? Were, then, the prophecies of the ancient sages to be thus falsified? These questions seem to have sorely perplexed the minds of the orthodox Hindus of the first one or two centuries of the Christian era.

"Then arose what we may call the Renaissance period in the history of India, a period of great activity in many branches of literature, arts, sciences and religion....The force of Buddhistic, Jain and Atheistic systems having weakened the strongholds of orthodox beliefs, this reactionary age set about to place the old dogmas and observances on a rationalistic basis...An age of construction, of re-adjustment and rearrangement of ancient beliefs had now succeeded a destructive age of scepticism and of barbarian invasions. The pity of it was that the reaction was carried a little too far to the verge of superstition, and the Puranas began to show not only a sectarian tendency but also a taste for the marvellous and the extraordinary.

"At this remarkable period in Indian history the glaring absurdity of supposing the Kali yuga to have already come to an end must have been keenly felt. If the Kali of 1,200 years had ended in 24 A. D., the Krita must have set in, which was not the case. As necessity has generally been the mother of invention, there arose an explanation, as ingenious as it was plausible, that the 1200 years allotted for the Kali were so many *divine* years or 432,000 ordinary human years.

"Such a subtle explanation obviated

THE DANGER OF THE KALI YUGA
COMING AGAIN TO A SPEEDY END

and thereby giving rise to fresh difficulties. It agreed well with the state of society at that time, which showed no signs of reverting to, but was receding away from the ancient orthodox ideal. It served to preserve the authority of the older writings like the Mahabharata and the Manusmriti, and applied well to existing circumstances. Moreover, the age of exaggerations had already commenced and the Puranas were beginning to distort facts into fabulous legends. Under such circumstances the extraordinary duration of the Yugas was quite in keeping with the times."

A word on the older signification of the three other Yugas. All the four words Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali occur for the first time in the Vedic works: the Aitareya and Taittiriya Brahmanas and the Vajasaneya Samhita (all roughly of the 11th century B.C.) as names of gambling dice. These were then, as Griffith says, made of the nuts of the Vibhitaka tree and the four sides seem to have been known by the names Kali, Dvapara, Treta and Krita according to the number of

dots marked on them, namely, one, two, three and four. The words *Kali* &c. in fact seem to have been names of numbers, as Gopala Aiyer points out. According to this authority it would seem that "a real historical period of two cycles of 1000 years, each dating from the epoch of Ikshwaku, the son of Vaivasvata Manu, came to an end a few years after the Mahabharata war. At this time there were also vague recollections of a prehistoric age preceding the epoch of Ikshwaku. This was probably the first age of the gods (Devanam prathama yuga) referred to in the Rig Vedic hymn X. 72. 2, a period lost in mist and stories of deluge...An historical period of 2000 years having come to an end soon after the War, the Dvapara yuga seems to have been confounded with the whole of that period; and the Kali yuga was supposed to last, as we have already seen, for a period of 1000 years. If the preceding Dvapara which was the second age was to last 2000 years or double the period of Kali, it followed as a matter of course that the Treta or the third age should last for thrice that period or for 3000 years, and that the Krita or the fourth yuga should extend for a period of 4000 years. Moreover the number of dots on the Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali sides of a die were four, three, two and one respectively. It is probable that the difference, in the periods for the four yugas was also due to the analogy of this model."

The Indian chronolgy, according to older works, therefore, does not claim for man on earth anything more than roughly four thousand years before the Christian era.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE TAMIL 'ACADEMY.'

Notwithstanding this fact, some persist in giving to literary activity in the South of India as many as 10,000 years before Christ. I quote below, a modern Ceylon writer of some repute, the Hon. Mr. K. Balasingham M. L. C. :—

"The Pandyan kingdom, according to the ancient Tamil books, was the seat of three great academies of learning. The first sangam or academy lasted 4,440 years. Only the names of some of the poems and of the kings of this period have come down to us. Its seat was the ancient Madura now submerged under the ocean. The second sangam, which had its seat at Kapadapuram, which was also submerged, lasted 3,700 years, and the works of this period also are known only by their names. The last sangam lasted 1,850 years covering the reigns of 49 kings. Some of the works of the poets of this sangam are extant. This account was at one time rejected as totally incredible because it was thought that human history could not go beyond 4004 B. C. But now Assyriologists have made us to get over that difficulty."

The last sentences contain a false notion about Bible chronology which most of our readers will know how to correct. The Bible nowhere professes to give us a chronology. The date 4004 for the creation of man was obtained by putting together the ages of the patriarchs, whose lineal succession, however, we are nowhere told, has been preserved for us without interruption. That the Church did not commit herself to this traditional calculation, once in great vogue, is seen by the fact that her Roman Martyrology marks down 5199 years after Adam as the date of the birth of the Saviour.

To come now to the Tamil 'academies': a little calm reflexion will enable us to set aside the story of the *three* sangams as a fable pure and simple. Some sort of a 'college' of poets probably existed during the Augustan age of Tamil literature in the early centuries

of the Christian Era. And this has been first magnified in true Puranic fashion, into an 'academy' covering several reigns of the Pandyan dynasty, and later extended by some fanciful conceit (as in the case of the four yugas) over as many as 9,990 years! For those of our readers whose love of their country and its traditions may be wounded by this view now generally held, however, among scholars, the following considerations are added:

It will be remarked that Agastya, the traditional leader (probably a mythological embodiment) of the earliest Brahmanical colony in South India, is made in all ancient accounts to preside over the first *and* second sangams through a period of 4,440 years. This is evidently absurd. Again the gods, Siva and Murugan, are among the members of the 'academy.' This is clearly fable. If the shadowy Agastya stands for the indubitable Aryan influence over the earliest Tamil literary activities, no Tamil literary production could have been earlier than the period of Aryan contact with the Dravidians. And this, according to Mr. Balasingham following Dutt, an Indian writer of well-balanced judgment (*Civilisation in Ancient India*), could not have been earlier than 1400-1000 B. C., the period of the Aryan settlement beyond the Indus.

The lower limit of the above period is itself too early for Tamil literary culture which owed so much to Buddhism and Jainism. The era of these two progressive sects in the South cannot be placed long before the fourth century B. C., which also was probably the time of the introduction of writing among the Tamils. The question of the introduction of writing should be a decisive one for the age of the 'academy,' as a society of learned men, such as the poets of the sangam are

said to have been, stood, from the nature of the case, in absolute need of written documents for pronouncing their judgments upon.

This upper limit of the period of Tamil literature does not, however, coincide with the period of the famous Tamil 'academy.' Careful Indian scholars do not give it an age earlier than the second century of our era, "the Augustan age—an age of great Buddhistic influence." (S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar M. A., *Ancient India*, p. 367.) Some among them find reasons to bring it down to the 7th or 8th century A. D. (*e. g.* M. Srinivasa Aiyangar M. A., *Tamil Studies*, p. 254.)

INDIA'S CIVILISATION.

Let us now turn to consider the type of civilisation which we can claim for India. It is, however, necessary to ask at the outset: What is civilisation? This is a question which has been variously answered by various thinkers. Some conceive it as the reign of social law which secures the safety of life and limb and enables man to develop industries, arts, sciences &c; some call it social progress and enlightenment; some require as its characteristics city life, political order, proficiency in the industrial and fine arts, acquaintance with philosophy and history, a written literature and an upper class with considerable wealth and leisure; others identify it with the triumph of mind over external agents. All are, however, agreed in attaching to the word a sense of *temporal* advancement and prosperity, as distinguished from *spiritual* progress and well-being. The characteristics of civilisation are often divided into material and intellectual, which latter is identified with culture. This two-fold division itself leaves the *spiritual* side of man entirely out of the sphere of what is connoted by the word *civilisation*. Charles S. Devas, in his learned work "The Key to the World's Progress," justly remarks that civilisation "is not to be measured by religion, morality or general happiness. No doubt" he continues, "the word can be stretched so as to include them; but becomes valueless by the inclusion, and we should be involved in the fruitless paradox that the Romans in the height of their civilisation were in some most important aspects less civilised than the illiterate barbarians of the North...It is fruitful to compare the respective vices and virtues, the respective distress and contentment of civilised and uncivilised societies rather than to place virtue and contentment among the

characteristics of civilisation and by this ill use of words to throw history into confusion" (p. 3). The same writer quotes St. Augustine to say that the agricultural and industrial arts, the fine arts and architecture, the libraries and schools, the wonders of music, of literature, of the mathematical and historical sciences—all this magnificence in which the Roman Empire abounded—were the common possession of the souls that were good and the souls that were evil; these were all the work of the human mind, not the work of grace or the way whereby immortal life is reached (p. 4).

It is clear, then, that civilisation has chiefly to do with the physical and intellectual sphere of human activity only, while its moral and spiritual sphere are governed by religion. This is not saying that the religion of a people may not influence its civilisation to a greater or less degree. We know that the European civilisation of the Middle Ages was, in all that was peculiar to it, an outcome of Christian principles and tastes. The modern industrial civilisation of England and Germany bear the impress of Protestant individualism. In like manner the drawbacks of Mohammedan civilisation are in great measure attributable to the false religious principles which inspired it. But whatever influence—beneficial or evil—religion may have exerted on a civilisation, the latter always remains a temporal affair—'of the earth earthy'—to be judged by secular standards and to be approved or condemned accordingly.

That India could boast of a certain type of civilisation in this sense goes without saying. But that type is widely different from modern European civilisation which may perhaps be characterised by the word 'Industrial', while Indian civilisation has been always

cultural in the main. Not bearing this capital distinction in mind, some Indians try to waive the question of true civilisation for India and make her civilisation consist only in

THE VAGUE FIELD OF SPIRITUALITY.

Thus the *Hindu Organ* of Jaffna wrote:

> "The most vital point of civilisation...is the co-ordination of all material, moral and intellectual progress to spiritual ends. True civilisation is a process which has this end in view. It may and should produce some material wants (*sic*), but this is not an end in itself, and when rightly employed it is a means whereby man's mental and spiritual nature is given greater play on its increasing release from the animal cares of life."

In corroboration of this view the *H. O.* makes the following quotation from Sir John Woodroffe's book "Is India civilised?":

> "That, then, is true civilisation which recognizing God as its beginning and as its end organizes men in society through their material and mental vehicle with the view to the manifestation of Spirit in its forms as true morality and true religion. Thereby man first recognizes his essential Divinity and then realises it in his conscious union with the self as manifested in the whole Cosmic process and then as transcending it".

In other words, civilisation, according to the *H.O.* and Sir John Woodroffe, consists in an "increasing release from the animal cares of life," in man's gradually "recognizing his essential Divinity"—whatever that may mean. Or, to put it equivalently: Civilisation is a supra-secular concern. Is this not a contradiction in terms?

But we must go to Sir John's book itself to discover what he means by the above high phraseology of his. "Is India civilised?"—this is the question he has put to himself. He replies that India is civilised

because a certain small section of its teeming masses believes in the philosophy of the Vedanta—the essential oneness of the Self and the souls of all living beings. This is the whole argument of his book, and all open minds should see at once that, aside from the confusion this unwarranted definition of civilisation gives rise to, the argument itself proves most fatal to the fair fame of India. We all know that India had once a great civilisation and that her decline was as lamentable as her palmy days were remarkable. But that civilisation was built up under other influences than the philosophy of the second-less Self. The natural fruits of *this* philosophy in action are shown in the following quotation from the "History of Intellectual Development" by Crozier: "The object of Hinduism," he says, "being to attain to bliss by the direct suppression of all forms of desire, all the great work of secular life which springs from the stimulus of one or other form of desire—of wealth, of power, of fame, of applause—is directly repressed; and life itself, with nothing on which to exercise itself, must become a weariness, and rebirth therefore a weariness and sorrow. It is obvious, then, that civilisation which is the record of achievements of man when pushed on by the desire to satisfy his wants—his want of what is good to eat, good to wear, good to ease the friction of life and of society, good for peace of mind, good for the satisfaction of the eye and heart and the like,—it is obvious that civilisation to men who can live on a little rice, and with whom the satisfaction of these desires could only serve to lay up a store of future demerit, must be an anomaly; and since, for the same reasons, science in the modern sense of the term, and in its application to the arts of life, has made no

advance, must remain stagnant and unprogressive." India's philosophy of apathy which Sir John identified with true cilivilisation has produced only selfishness, ignorance among the masses, the rigours of the caste system, cruelty to women and the dreamy speculative Hindu mentality which has worked such an incalculable harm to the country.

The thinking mind will therefore have no difficulty in accepting the following conclusions: first, that civilisation is not spirituality, and secondly, that the Vedanta view of life (which Sir John wrongly identifies with spirituality) tends to swamp all true characteristics of civilisation, and lastly, that the incontestable decadence which we note in Indian civilisation is due, at least partly, to the low ideals embodied in Hinduism.

The writers whom we quoted for comment claim for Indian civilisation—which they consider exclusively as spiritual—a certain well-marked progress all round. It is therefore incumbent on us to examine what

THIS FASHIONABLE WORD "PROGRESS"

is really responsible for. Those who speak of progress seem to imagine that man has been growing continually better and in the present times made a gigantic stride forward. But those who have scientifically investigated the matter think otherwise. Sir Bertram Windle, after examining the different prehistoric periods of man's history, concludes: "It is curious, but there has been no greater fallacy than that which attributes to human race always and everywhere a continuous tendency to progress." A writer in the "Month" for May 1919, quotes James J. Walsh to say that "the man who talks much about progress in our time usually knows only the history of human thought

in his own generation, and not very much about that. In nearly every important phase of human achievement we are, in present accomplishment, far behind the great predecessors. In our generation we are confessedly imitators in every phase of aesthetic expression. In painting, sculpture, art and literature we are quite frank in confessing that we are doing no work at all so good as the work of our forefathers of many generations and sometimes many centuries ago. Whence then comes the idea of progress? It has obtained most of its vogue from the theory of evolution; and the lack of evidence for evolution in general, in spite of the persuasion on the part of many educated people that there are proofs for it, can be very well judged from the corresponding lack of evidence with regard to progress in humanity; there is complete absence of proof for the latter, when the situation with regard to human achievement in the really great things of human life is examined." For instance, to use the words of another author cited in the same article: "The poetry of the early Hebrews and of the early Greeks has never been surpassed and hardly ever equalled. Neither has the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, nor the speeches of Demosthenes and Cicero. No one pretends that there is progress in art. The masterpieces of architecture, sculpture and painting date as a rule, from long before our time, some of them nearly twenty-five hundred years back." We must therefore conclude with Mr. Devas that "if we sought to determine whether in civilisation as a whole there has been retrogression or progress we should be met by the difficulty of having no common measure for comparing Roman roads with the poems of Virgil or for comparing a flourishing woollen manufacture with the pictures of Valasquez."

Sir John's theory of progress is as evasive as his theory of civilisation.

"If by progress is meant," he says," that the individual soul (Jivatma) evolves from lowly origins through higher forms to man, there is such progress. Ages before Lamarck and Darwin it was held in India that man has passed through 84 lakhs (8,400,000) of birth as plants, animals, as an 'inferior' species of man, and then as the ancestor of the developed type existing to-day......This progress is displayed in the evolution of man from the animal, plant and mineral and in his further development until through an ever-growing knowledge and morality he attains complete Humanity and therefore Divinity since of this last perfected man is the highest earthly form."

Thus it comes out that human progress is what is meant by evolution and that the Hindus have formulated and believed in the theory of evolution ages ago. But all this is pathetically false. As for Darwinism it is dead and buried since a few decades, and it is unfortunate that a man of Sir John's standing should confound it with the modern theory of evolution which is itself a baseless assumption. For, minerals are not evolved into plants; plants are not evolved into animals; and animals never become men. The contrary of these assertions (which is the theory in question) has never been proved. But progress there is among men in some phases of human activity, although there is retrogression also simultaneously in other phases. Again, Sir John has completely

MISUNDERSTOOD THE HINDU THEORY OF TRANSMIGRATION.

There is absolutely nothing in common for this theory with that of evolution. The transmigration theory posits 84 lakhs of specific forms as the *matrices* through which the eternal and essentially Divine soul passes in the course of its purification.

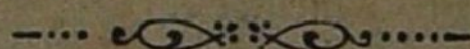
The soul leaves the matrices where they were in the beginning of 'creation' without in any way developing them. It takes bodies and quits them just as a man dons and doffs clothing. In scholastic language, the soul of the partisans of transmigration does not inform the body but only inhabits it. And besides, in transmigration, the passage of the soul through embodiments is not always progressive, but also and often retrogressive. The theory of evolution, on the other hand, teaches that the lower forms of life *evolve* the higher. The forms themselves undergo progressive change and give birth to new ones. In transmigration the forms are fixed and unchangeable; in evolution they give rise one to another. In the former the soul is eternal; in the latter the same is originated in time. In the former, the body imprisons the self-existent soul; in the latter, the body produces the transient soul. There cannot be more polaric opposition between two systems of thought as in this case!

In limiting progress to a blind mechanical aspect of nature—which aspect itself is largely a fancy and no fact—Sir John and others of his school have nothing to gain. We have to seek progress in the results of the conscious efforts of man, in his physical, mental and moral activities. It is our deliberate opinion that Hinduism, as distinguished from the earlier Brahmanism, has not made for progress on these lines.

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